

NEWTON ABBOT RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for 1943

To the Chairman and Members of the Council:-

This Report - the fifth of the War Period, and it is to be hoped the last - is drawn up in accordance with instructions contained in a Ministry of Health Circular dated 15th February, 1944, which directs that it shall be on the same lines as previous war-time reports and confined to essential matters effecting public health, and particularly those arising out of the War.

On this occasion the Minister also requires a more or less detailed statement regarding the sufficiency and quality of the water supply of the District.

Another wearisome year has come and gone and again there is little to show for it and little of interest to record. Owing to lack of labour and materials essential and important work is piling up on all sides and nothing can be done about it. Schemes of Water Supply, of Sewerage and of Housing, to mention only a few which at one time were considered matters of urgency, are now almost forgotten. In the post-war rush we must see to it that we get out fair share of all there is to be had, but even so I fancy some of us will have to live to a great age to see even the commencement of much that should be done.

However, in spite of it all the general health of the District, in common with the rest of the country, continues to be excellent, and that is the main thing. Discomforts and inconveniences are certainly numerous, but taking everything into consideration we have little to complain about and much to be thankful for.

To the above statement that there is little to record, there is at least one exception, and that a notable one. I refer to the Moretonhampstead Sewage Gutter. After sixty odd years of more or less efficient service it had got into a bad state of repair, and latterly was a continual source of trouble and expense. Already earmarked for early attention after the war, the advent of a new owner of the land brought matters to a climax sooner than was expected. He would tolerate it no longer and said so plainly, so war or no war something had to be done about it. The chief difficulty was labour; it was not to be had. The only way was by direct labour and direct labour did it. It certainly reflects great credit on the Surveyor and his handful of men that in spite of many and unforeseen difficulties and in the face of considerable opposition from several Ministries, they accomplished what they did and though the original scheme of two filter beds had to be reduced to one, the final result should effect a vast improvement and be a permanent monument to enterprise and persistence.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Disease	Cases	Sent to Hospital	Deaths
Measles	158	-	-
Whooping Cough	40	-	-
Scarlet Fever	32	20	1
Pneumonia	17	1	-
Erysipelas	10	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	1	-
Paratyphoid B.	1	1	-
Typhoid	1	-	-

The District in common with the rest of the Country was visited by measles in the first half of the year. The epidemic was moderate as compared with that of 1941.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE (Contd)

Scarlet Fever. Rather more cases than usual, and though there was one death, it was generally of a very mild type.

The outstanding and unprecedented feature of the year was the complete absence of Diphtheria. Though in view of the large number of children who have been immunised a reduction in the usual number of cases was to be expected, that there would be none at all surpassed all expectations. Any doubt on the part of the parents as to whether or not they should have their children protected against this dangerous disease should now be removed once and for all.

Immunisation against Diphtheria. For this purpose 58 sessions in the various parishes were held during the year with the result that 398 more children were added to the already very large number previously protected.. Of the new children 272 were under 5 and 126 over 5.

It can now be estimated that of the total number of children under 5 in the district (approximately 990) 70% have been immunised and of the over 5's (approximately 2,500) 95%.

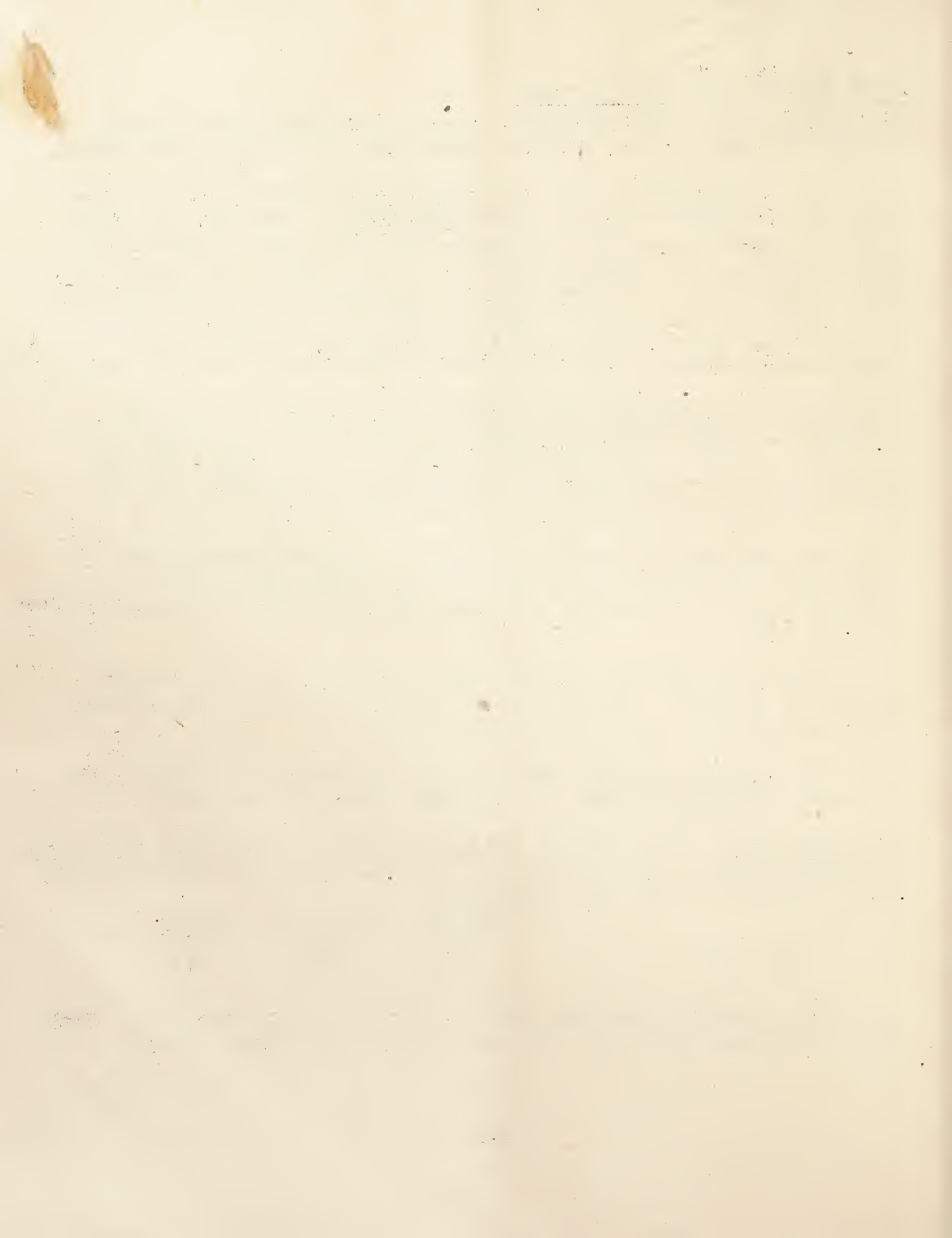
This is good as regards the latter, but the former might be better. Efforts will be made during the present year to improve matters in this respect.

The County School Nurses and Teachers have been very helpful throughout and we are very grateful to them.

Tuberculosis. The number of new cases as indicated below is slightly above the average for the District as they include some notified from the Services:-

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
New Cases	11	19	30
Deaths	87	34	121

The totals for 1942 were 25 and 15 respectively. With the exception of 6 all the new cases were lung cases.



THE EVACUEES. Though the numbers are slowly but surely dwindling, there is still a fair sprinkling throughout the District. In the last report it was recorded that on 31st. December, 1942, there were 500 adults and 550 children resident. A year later this number had been reduced to 280 adults and 490 children. Of the latter 370 are unaccompanied and include 40 in the Residential Nurseries at Dunley House and Netherton.

The adults for the most part occupy the requisitioned houses, 22 in number. These are retained whether occupied or not, as we are not out of the wood yet, and they may be wanted at any time.

Hostel for Contagious Skin Diseases at Ford Park, Newton Abbot is still going strong. It serves a large area of South Devon, and Scabies (Itch) is the chief complaint, The numbers treated during the year were as follows:-

	<u>In Patients 112.</u>		<u>Various</u>
	<u>Scabies</u>	<u>Impetigo</u>	
Newton Abbot Rural	43	6	-
Newton Abbot Urban	25	9	2
Ashburton	9	-	8
Dawlish	6	3	-
Teignmouth	-	1	-
	<u>83</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>10</u>

	<u>Out Patients 247</u>	
Newton Abbot Rural	191	1
Newton Abbot Urban	53	2
	<u>244</u>	<u>3</u>

Grand total of In Patients and Out Patients 359
Of these 108 were Evacuees. 64, were adults.

HOUSING. As was to be expected little activity can be recorded under this heading, but the quota for the district of 4 Agricultural houses was commenced in October, two at Denbury and two at Ilsington at a cost of about £900 each including the sites. These may be the forerunners of the many more needed, but, it is to be hoped, not at that price

WATER SUPPLY OF THE DISTRICT. With the exception of the three small villages of Bickington, Manaton and North Bovey, which are mainly dependent on well water, the remaining villages of the District, comprising 80 per cent of all the houses are served by public piped supplies taken into the houses. There are no standpipe supplies. Generally speaking the different supplies are constant, sufficient, and of good quality. The largest are or can be chlorinated, and where there is any tendency to plumbo-solvency the acidity is neutralised by lime at the source.


In an otherwise featureless year in connection with water supply, one occurrence is worthy of note. The Clause in the Deed of Gift prohibiting the use of Ilsington water for anyone outside the Parish has now been annulled. Bickington has been waiting for this for years so now the hopes of that more or less waterless village may at last be realised.

Incidentally the Ilsington Supply can now be augmented in case of need by the water in the Haytor Quarry ponds.

W.H.SCOTT.

Medical Officer of Health.

Council Offices,
Kingsteignton Road,
NETON ABBOT.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29909156>

VITAL STATISTICS for 1943.

POPULATION: 24,900 (a decrease of 500)

LIVE BIRTHS:

Male: 176 (Illegit.8) Female: 178 (Illegit.18) TOTAL:- 354

Birth Rate = 14.2 per 1,000 people

Average rate for last ten years = 13.1

England & Wales Birth Rate = 16.5

STILL BIRTHS:

Male: 8 (Illegit.1) Female: 6 (Illegit.1) TOTAL:- 14

Still Birth Rate = 38 per 1000 total births.

DEATHS

Male: 161 Female: 169 TOTAL: 330

Death Rate (crude) = 13.2 per 1,000 people.

Average rate (crude) for last ten years = 13.2

England and Wales Rate = 12.1.

MATERNAL MORTALITY. 2 = A Rate of 5.4. per 1,000 births
(live and still)
England and Wales Rate = 2.29

INFANT MORTALITY. (under one year)

Male 7: Female 9 (all legitimate) Total: 16

A rate of 45 per 1000 live births.

England & Wales Rate 49.

RAINFALL for year at Bovey Tracey: 36.53 inches.

(Ten year Average = 41.)

